

# PEOPLE & THINGS By ATTICUS

**WHO** made the money out of the big out-of-hours trade in gilt-edged stocks last Wednesday week on the eve of the raising of Bank Rate? We shall probably never know, but many whispers are going round the City.

The semi-official figure for the volume of overnight transactions is £4 million—not a big figure in comparison with the scores of millions which other people make in a few hours. The profit on this by the next day could have been £200,000. A whacking sum even for rich men to make in one day. But were the sellers individuals?

It is being said that there was one single selling order for £3 million. Only the strongest kind of operator could have entered into such a transaction. Since the market is so thin, does such business only—so speculating here on a shoe-string from Account to Account—it is obvious that if big money was made it was made by concerns, with very big assets.

The fact is that there were strong rumours of impending steps to intensify the credit squeeze, and some people drew their own conclusions about Bank Rate. It was a gamble, but a pretty safe one.

The maximum movement of gilt-edged on a normal No-Change day would be perhaps 1 per cent.: the rise of Bank Rate caused a loss of 3 to 4 points. So the speculators were laying money at, say, 100 to 8 against on a horse—with they may have thought—an even chance of winning. Who would?



György Csiffra at practice.

panegyrics from London critics at his Festival Hall début last week-end, as well as captivating a new audience.

Before he fled, a refugee from his native Budapest last year, his prowess was merely whispered about in the West; his London triumph follows similar successes wherever he has been heard.

He remains a simple and unaffected family man, devoted to his wife and young son who travel with him grateful for his reception and delighted by a virtuous singularity free from the tantrums and temperament that might be expected from the dash and fire of his piano-playing.

He will return here in January and again in June, when I predict he will meet enthusiasm even greater.

## £50,000-a-year Genius

**WHO** is the most highly paid woman in America? The most reliable answer is to Miss Dorothy Shaver, who has just received \$50,000 as president of the New York store of Lord and Taylor. She arrives in London tomorrow on a pleasure and business visit.

At one point in the last Presidential elections her name was being seriously canvassed as a candidate for the first woman vice-president of the United States, and before long she is expected to be offered that final accolade of successful American business-womanhood—an ambassadorship.

A granddaughter of one of the toughest Southern generals in the Civil War, she has proved one of the most unlikely of business geniuses, combining with her head for figures the most outstanding qualities of a knowledge of modern art which has landed her on the boards of the Metropolitan Museum and the New York Museum of Modern Art.

Sir Richard Burbidge, chairman of Harrods, who has known Miss Shaver for many years and is one of her closest friends here, tells me he has taken a sharp assessment of the delicacies of his position and regards silence as his best card, at least for the moment.

## General Sphinx

**G**EORGE SPEIDEL's visit to London as Commander-in-Chief Allied Forces, Central Europe, has been complete negation of the genial public relations which we used to consider as essential to these international officers.

A heavy security screen at London Airport included enough Intelligence Officers to keep reporters and photographers well out of range and when the party arrived at the Dorchester General Speidel went straight to his suite.

He was induced to come downstairs again by the G.O.C. British Command, Lt.-Gen. Sir Charles Coleman, so he could be photographed with General Coleman pouring him a cup of tea, but returned to his room at once—without drinking the tea.

No doubt General Speidel has taken a sharp assessment of the delicacies of his position and regards silence as his best card, at least for the moment.

## Csiffra to Return

**G**YÖRGY CSIFFRA, the thirty-six-year-old Hungarian pianist, returned to his Paris home this week a happy man. He had won unusual friends here, tells me he

when they should be on duty, would be entertained.

## Outside, Looking In

**M**R. HERMAN LEVIN, who flew in a day or so ago to arrange the London presentation of the American legend "My Fair Lady," has grey hair, a small chin, horn-rimmed spectacles, a delicate wit, and a way of side-stepping questions that any three-quarter would be proud of.

I noted him down as "New York lawyer," which I am glad to say is not his only title, one of many in his profession who have turned to theatrical management on Broadway—"there is so much litigation in the theatre that we sort of fall into it."

He began his "new career" in 1946 with a musical entitled "Call Me Mister," which ran for two years, then turned to straight plays. Sartre among them, with "very little success," until Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe came along with their idea of adapting "Pygmalion" and "I climbed on the bandwagon." His other passion is horse-racing, which he describes as an equally hazardous hobby.

But of all his stories I like the one he tells of the man who, at the end of a month's holiday, managed to get into the Mark Hellinger Theatre on a recent Saturday night to see "My Fair Lady." "It was hot and humid," he says, "and I sat at the back. After the final curtain, however, he said he thought the play was so enchanting that it would run even without him in it."

It was, of course, Rex Harrison.

## Fastest Tortoise

**F**LYING-OFFICER ELBERT DU CROSSES, of No. 30 Squadron R.A.F., a tortoise serving with the 2nd Tactical Air Force at Oldenburg, Germany, will be officially promoted to the rank of Lieutenant on Friday. He is the official mascot of the squadron, one of the world's most celebrated pets.

He has a collection of over 500 cuttings from as far as China and Chile, and an American aviation magazine has elected him a life subscriber.

According to the R.A.F. his fastest record is of being the first tortoise to break the sound barrier, which he has now done thirteen times, in his specially designed flying kit. He is also unique in being the only German national commissioner on the team.

He keeps for the past year has been Flying-Officer Goss Maynard, a young jet pilot. "Looking after Elbert, seeing he is in position for meals meetings, and flying is quite a lot job compared with the administrative work involved," he says. "His personal file is bulging with correspondence from the ends of the earth."

**Ladies in Armoury House**

**I**T was an odd scene at Armoury House last night ladies dining with the officers and other ranks of the Honourable Artillery Company. It is an almost unheard-of occurrence in recent times.

The ladies, delightfully French, were supporters and wives of the Sabres Rugby Club, the H.A.C.'s footballing team, for the week-end as a reciprocal hospitality for many visits they have paid to Sabres d'Orléans during their European tour. Tomorrow the French party are to be guests of the Governor of the Tower of London, Sir Alexander Fisher, and then of the Lord Mayor.

No doubt, at last night's dinner someone was able to explain to the French ladies how their host, Simon Parker,

captain of the H.A.C. team, happens to be a mere Gunner while lower at the table were junior and senior officers—and sergeants. The traditional democratic approach of the H.A.C. mystifies most foreigners.

## People and Words

Tell me again, Mr. Churchill still —Miss JAVINE MANSFIELD.

Britain is going to get the pinch—but better a sharp pinch now than a knock-out punch later on.

—Dr. CHARLES HILL.

Scout radio is no longer the medium for the young, but a mass medium for the occupied, for those who are doing something else.

—Sir GEORGE BARNS.

I'm quite sure pain is a jolly good thing, but I don't like you to the mark.

—Sir COMPTON MACKENZIE.

School attendance at bayonet point is not compatible with the American way of life.

—GOVERNOR FAUBUS.

Skiffe is a kind of do-it-yourself music, and often it's not bad.

—Mr. TEE HEATH.